

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-18

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R 151059Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3968

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL DOUALA BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 2676

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, GB, EX, SP

SUBJ: EQUATORIAL GUINEA-GABON LAND BORDER PROBLEM

REFS: A. YAOUNDE 2671

B. YAOUNDE 2466

C. LIBREVILLE 903

D. MADRID 4509

1. SUMMARY. IT APPEARS FROM CONVERSATION DCM FRIEDMAN AND DOUALA CONSUL MITHOEFER HAD WITH SPANISH AMBASSADOR AND COUNSELOR DURING AUGUST 8-10 MALABO VISIT--AND CONFLICTING MAPS THEY SAW--THAT DEFUSING OF EG-GABON LAND BORDER ISSUE DURING JULY 13 MACIAS-BONGO TALKS STILL LEAVES THORNY PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED BY MIXED COMMISSION AGREED TO BY TWO PRESIDENTS. EVEN WITH BEST OF GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES, PROBLEMS COULD PERSIST IN EFFORT TO RECONCILE (A) BORDERS DEFINED IN 1900 TREATY OF PARIS WHICH NOW EXPLICITLY ACCEPTED BY BOTH PARTIES WITH (B) LONG-STANDING DE FACTO AREAS OF EFFECTIVE OCCUPATION
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AND CONTROL. EXTENT OF SUCH AREAS ALLEGEDLY MUCH GREATER THAN

SMALL AREA JUST SOUTH OF CAMEROON BORDER WHICH WAS LOCALE OF JULY DISPUTE.

2. ARTICLE 4 OF TREATY OF PARIS (ACCORDING TO TEXT SHOWN VISITORS AT SPANISH EMBASSY) PLACES BORDER 9 DEGREES LONGITUDE EAST OF PARIS (OR 11 DEGREES, 20 MINUTES EAST) FOR ENTIRE LENGTH OF N-S BORDER BETWEEN EG AND GABON. SPANISH EMBASSY HAS UNDATED COLONIAL-PERIOD MAP ENTITLED "GUINEA CONTINENTAL ESPANOLA" (AT SCALE 1:300,000 PRODUCED BY SPANISH GEOGRAPHICAL AND MAP INSTITUTE) WHICH SHOWS DE FACTO DEMARCATION LINE OF EFFECTIVE OCCUPATION AT 11 20E FROM SOUTHERN BORDER ONLY AS FAR NORTH AS RIVER BENITO, WHEREAFTER BORDER FOLLOWS COURSE OF RIVERS FUMO AND KYE TO CAMEROON BORDER. EMBASSY COUNSELOR ASSERTED HE HAD VERIFIED ON GROUND DURING PAST YEAR THAT THIS IS INDEED THE EFFECTIVE LINE OF OCCUPATION AND CONTROL; THUS SPAIN AND NOW EQUATORIAL GUINEA HAVE FOR MANY YEARS TREATED AS THEIR OWN CONSIDERABLE EXPANSES OF TERRITORY THAT LEGALLY WERE FRENCH AND NOW GABONESE SOUTH OF THE MOST RECENTLY DISPUTED SMALL AREA NEAR THE CAMEROON BORDER; CONVERSELY, GABON NOW OCCUPIES A SMALL BIT OF EG TERRITORY IN THE MIDDLE WHERE THE KYE BENDS TO THE WEST.

3. THAT SAME SPANISH MAP SHOWS A NUMBER OF LOCALITIES (INCLUDING PRESIDENT MACIAS' HOME TOWN OF MONGOMO) WHICH ARE LOCATED WEST OF THE RIVER AS LYING WELL EAST OF THE 11 20E MERIDIAN. (IF CORRECT, MACIAS WOULD THUS PROVE TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN GABON.)

4. SAME SPANISH SOURCES ALSO CLAIM THAT GABONESE AIRPORT NEAR VILLAGE OF MEKOARA LIES WELL WITHIN EG NORTH OF THE EAST-WEST BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WHICH 1900 TREATY CLEARLY PLACES AT 1 DEGREE NORTH LATITUDE FOR THAT STRETCH OF BORDER.

5. DESPITE BORDER DEFINITIONS AS SET FORTH IN 1900 TREATY, SPANISH EMBASSY OBVIOUSLY IN FULL SYMPATHY WITH EG POSITION IN BORDER DISPUTE BASED ON HISTORICAL OCCUPATION. AMBASSADOR CLAIMED RECENT CONFRONTATION ORIGINATED WHEN GABONESE MARCHED INTO TRADITIONAL EG TERRITORY WEST OF RIVER KYE. ASCRIBED MOTIVE AS BEING GABONESE DESIRE TO CONTROL ROAD BETWEEN CAMEROON AND GABON SMALL STRETHC OF WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE PASS
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THROUGH EG.

6. GABONESE AMBASSADOR--WHO WAS IN DOUALA FOR COUPLE OF DAYS BUT EXPECTED RETURN MALABO AUGUST 9 OR 10--WAS SUMMONED BY MACIAS TO COME IMMEDIATELY TO BATA ON RETURN. SOURCES SPECULATED THIS WAS TO PREPARE FORTHCOMING VISIT OF BONGO TO EG.
MOORE

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